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LATIN ARMS TRADE DETAILED IN COURT

Ex-C.I.A. Aide Challenges U.S. Data on Nicaragua Sales to Salvadoran Rebels

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THE HAGUE, Sept. 16 — A former analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency testified before the World Court today that there was "no credible evidence" that the Nicaraguan Government had provided significant quantities of arms to insurgents in El Salvador for at least the last four years.

The assertion that the Nicaraguans have provided weapons to the leftist guerrillas in El Salvador has been a major reason used by the Reagan Administration to explain its support of the rebels who are seeking to overthrow the Nicaraguan Government.

Asked today by Abram Chayes, a Harvard professor who heads the Nicaraguan legal team here, if the Nicaraguan Government was involved in arms traffic to El Salvador, the former C.I.A. analyst, David MacMichael, said:

"I do not believe that such a traffic goes on now, nor has it gone on for the past four years at least, and I believe that the representations of the United States Government to the contrary are designed to justify its policies toward the Nicaraguan Government."

Evidence Disappears, He Says

Mr. MacMichael said that in late 1980 and early 1981 there was credible evidence that Nicaragua did supply the Salvadoran guerrillas with arms, but the evidence disappeared by the early spring of 1981, some six months before the United States began its extensive support for the contras, as the rebels are known.

The World Court, which is officially known as the International Court of Justice, is hearing a Nicaraguan charge that the United States is committing aggression against it by supporting the contras. The Reagan Administration is boycotting the proceedings, saying the court has no jurisdiction in the case.

On Friday, the State Department issued a long position paper on the matter, asserting that there was "a mountain of evidence" that Nicaragua was continuing to ship weapons to rebels in El Salvador and terming Nicaraguan denials of this "an outright lie."

Much of the information in the document was attributed to Salvadoran guerrillas who have defected or been captured in the last year. Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, asserted that this information corroborated United States intelligence reports that are classified.

According to the court's rules, Nicaragua must prove its accusations against the United States to win a judgment.

Justification for U.S.

Some specialists here have argued that if it was proved that the Nicaraguans were involved in an attempt to overthrow the Government of El Salvador by providing arms to insurgents, the United States might be justified, in terms of international law, in taking military action against Nicaragua to force it to stop the arms flow.

Nicaraguan leaders have acknowledged that some arms from Nicaragua have reached the rebels, but they have denied that this was Government policy. In an interview with The New York Times earlier this year, President Daniel Ortega Saavedra of Nicaragua said, "There were times when we were finding groups of 40 to 50 of our army soldiers ready with knapsacks and weapons on their way to El Salvador," but, he said, "we have had to detain them and to punish them."

Mr. Ortega said that at one point, the first United States Ambassador to the Sandinista Government, Lawrence Pezzullo, presented him with evidence that an airstrip in the western province of León was being used to transport arms to Salvadoran rebels. He said, "We took necessary measures so this airstrip would not continue to be used for this type of activities."

In voting to give money to the contras, however, Congressional intelligence committees have contended that Nicaraguan aid to the Salvadoran insurgents was significant in 1981 and 1982, but has diminished greatly.

In his testimony, the main lines of which he has stated earlier, Mr. MacMichael described the formulation in the fall of 1981 of a C.I.A. plan, approved by the White House, to create a "covert force" to put military pressure on Nicaragua.

Based on Nicaragua 'Menace'

"The general premise of the plan was that Nicaragua was a menace to the countries of the Latin American region," Mr. MacMichael said in his testimony, which began last Friday. "It was assumed that the Nicaraguan Government was inherently totalitarian and repressive."

The C.I.A. strategy, he said, was to provoke a violent military response and domestic repression by Nicaragua, thus countering the favorable image that the Sandinistas had in world public opinion.

He said that from March 1981 until April 1982, when he was a contract employee of the C.I.A., he had access to virtually all the information being collected by the United States Government on Central America. This included information from aerial photography, radio interceptions, interrogations of prisoners and defectors, and United States radar installations placed in the Gulf of Fonseca, between Nicaragua and El Salvador.

The information showed for a period that there was an arms flow from Nicaragua to El Salvador, Mr. MacMichael said, adding, "It didn't come in any more after the very beginning of 1981, February or March."

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